

Gettysburg / Learning Activities

#2. "ENGAGED IN A GREAT CIVIL WAR" – The Battle

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#2 What would you do, stay or flee?

What will you do when your very existence is threatened?

[Teacher Note: You may wish to introduce this segment by reading the words of Salome Myers, a young white woman living in Gettysburg, who writes in her diary on June 15, 1863: "The Darkies made such a racket up and down by our house that we could not sleep." The noise she hears is the sound of her black neighbors fleeing town with all the belongings they could carry. What is making them leave so suddenly? Students will find out by reading accounts of African American experience in the time leading up to the battle.

Tell students as they read to imagine that they look out their window and see the scenes they are reading about. A friend shouts that the Rebels are coming. They have only a moment to decide if they will stay or flee.]

A. Decide whether you flee, or stay and hide.

The Confederate army is on the move and many of your black neighbors are fleeing town. Will you? There are risks if you stay, and risks if you go.

To figure out what you should do, read the following accounts about African Americans' experiences as the Confederate Army draws closer to Gettysburg.

Then, use the following Student Chart to chart the risks and benefits of staying and of fleeing Gettysburg, as you read the accounts.

Gettysburg / Learning Activities

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	Risks	Benefits
Should I stay? Name of Doc:		
Should I Flee? Name of Doc:		

B. Decide where you'll go, and what you'll bring.

You have been given a map to guide your journey. Study it carefully and determine - Where you will go? And why? Be sure to provide evidence drawn from the map.

(INCLUDE MAP HERE SHOWING TOPOGRAPHY, ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES, DEMOGRAPHY, AND ROUTES OF CONFEDERATE INVASION AND UNION PURSUIT)

Gettysburg / Learning Activities

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C. Write a narrative of your flight, hiding, or capture, in the form of a letter, diary entry, or reminiscence.

Consider answering the following questions in your narrative:

- What do you bring and why?
- What do you have to leave behind?
- Would you ever return to Gettysburg? Why or why not?
- If so, when would you go back?
- If you stay behind in Gettysburg, how will you hide? Where will you go? Whom do you trust and why?